

# 11 All Army Boxers advance to Armed Forces

BY ESAU LOLIS  
SCOUT STAFF

Fort Huachuca played host to the Army's biggest boxing bonanza Friday and Saturday at Barnes Field House.

More than 1,800 spectators witnessed 29 boxers from across the Army contend for the All Army Boxing Championship.

Boxing enthusiasts enjoyed free admission to both nights of competition while watching 16 bouts.

During the preliminary bouts, Staff Sgt. Eric Raymon and Spc. Nathaniel Hicks both from Fort Huachuca provided a crowd-pleasing bout that had spectators ooohing and aahing for four rounds of evenly-matched boxing. At the conclusion of the bout, everyone was on their feet anticipating the judges decision. The boxers received a standing ovation and crowd-favorite Hicks won the preliminary bout.

Hicks went on to face world-class athlete boxer, Spc. Quentin McCoy, Fort Carson, Colo., for the Middleweight championship Saturday evening.

McCoy punished Hicks blow by blow until the sound of the bell in round four. McCoy outpointed Hicks 34-13.

"I am mentally stronger this year than I was last year," McCoy said. "I think that's my biggest step forward so far."

McCoy said that 75 percent of competition is mental and 25 percent is physical. "I think I'm finally getting the mental part down," he said, laughing.

Returning to this year's boxing competition were 2005 Conseil de International Sports Militaire Light Heavyweight Bronze Medalist Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs of Fort Carson Colo., and the 2004 light Middleweight Gold Medalist 1st Lt. Boyd Melson.

Downs won gold at the Armed Forces Boxing Championships last year and nabbed a bronze medal at the U.S. Amateur Boxing Nationals last March.

On Saturday night, Downs won the 2006 All Army Light Heavyweight gold medal with a 'referee stop contest due to head injury.' At

the beginning of round one, Downs threw a series of powerful blows to the head of Spc. Tremaine Knox of Fort Riley, Kan., sending him to the canvas. The referee stopped the contest after only 29 seconds into the first round.

Former CISM gold medalist and three-time All Army champion 1st Lt. Boyd Melson won the Light Middleweight gold medal. He moved forward in his quest to the 2006 CISM championship by defeating Spc. Jonathan Conn by a 'referee stop contest.'

Shortly into the third round, Melson threw a lightning-fast combination, dazing Conn and causing his nose to bleed. This sent him into a dizzying standing eight-count. The referee stopped the contest and declared Melson the victor.

Unopposed boxers Spc. John Franklin and Sgt. Jose Jimenez fought a match bout Saturday evening. Franklin won the bout by outpointing Jimenez 33 to 13.

Jimenez, who returned from Iraq just three weeks ago, described his advancement to the All Army Boxing Championship saying, "it was a long time coming." Jimenez competed in 2002 but did not place.

In a battle of Army Heavyweight superstars, defending All Army champion Sgt. Joe Guzman of Fort Carson, Colo., faced off against Spc. Jeffrey Spencer of Fort Hood, Texas, during the final bout of the night. Both boxers were evenly matched, blow for blow, during the first two rounds.

The Guzman onslaught began in round three. The bell rang to begin the final round and Guzman came out swinging with an array of scoring blows to Spencer's torso. The referee stopped the bout twice to warn Guzman. Guzman nearly dropped Spencer, but Spencer fought back bravely.

The crowd went wild as the competition came down to the last ten seconds. Once the bout was over, the crowd eagerly anticipated the judge's decision. Guzman was named champion, out-pointing Spencer by just three points. With a score of 27-30, Guzman was awarded the 2006 All Army Heavyweight gold medal.

"He came out fast and I didn't think he was going to be able to maintain that tempo," Guzman said of Spencer. "The last round I got two

eight-counts and that's what I needed," he said.

Guzman went on to say he changed his boxing style a little during the last round which helped him to win.

Sgt. Esteban Almaraz fought against Staff Sgt. Marshall Christmas, contending for the 141-lb. weight-class championship. Christmas returned to compete this year after taking a year off to be an All Army boxing coach. The bout was evenly matched and Almaraz stole the bout during the last ten seconds by scoring two blows. This earned him the 2006 All Army Light Welterweight gold medal.

Super heavyweight Sgt. Andrew Shepherd of Fort Eustis, Va., advanced to the Armed Forces Championship unopposed. Shepherd was scheduled to box Sgt. David Griffin of Fort Hood, Texas, and the only other super Heavyweight in camp. Griffin injured his shoulder during training and was unable to compete.

Just three women made it to this year's All Army trial camp and championships. 2nd Lt. Khara Keegan, 119, of Fort Huachuca, Ariz., Spc. Lupita Cook, 154, of Fort Polk, La., and Sgt. Princess Finn, 165, of Camp Humphries, Korea. Keegan and Finn will advance to the Armed Forces Championships.

"Unfortunately we only have so many females; just three of us, and we are all in three different weight classes and there's a large enough range between our weights that we can't even have a match bout," Keegan said. Hopefully, in the future, we can get more women involved in boxing and aware of the sport," she added.

Several boxers contended for a spot on the World Class Athlete Program boxing team.

All Army Head Coach Basheer Abdullah is currently looking at four candidates for the WCAP Program. Sgt. Andrew Shepherd, 201+, Spc. Charles Rios, 132, Sgt. Esteban Almaraz, 141, and Sgt. Jose Jimenez, 125.

"We have some of the best amateur boxers in the country in the WCAP Program," Abdullah said.

Abdullah went on to say he's honored and fortunate to be the head coach of the All Army Boxing Team and is looking forward to defend the Armed Forces title at the champion-

ships.

"We prepare ourselves to box against the best and we try very hard to complete at our best," Abdullah said.

Eleven Army boxers will compete at the 2006 Armed Forces Championship May 11-18 at Port Hueneme, Calif.

## Results

**119 lbs.**

**Spc. John Franklin, Fort Carson, Colo.**

**125 lbs.**

**Sgt. Jose Jimenez, Hunter Army Airfield**

**132 lbs.**

**Spc. Charles Rios, Fort Hood, Texas, and  
Fort Polk, La., 1:15 in Round 1.**

**141 lbs.**

**Sgt. Esteban Almaraz, Fort Hood, Texas,  
Marshall Christmas, Fort Carson, Colo.**

**152 lbs.**

**1st Lt. Boyd Melson, Fort Carson, Colo.,  
Conn, Fort Bragg, N.C., 0:43 in Round 1.**

**165 lbs.**

**Spc. Quentin McCoy, Fort Carson,  
Nathaniel Hicks, Fort Huachuca, Ariz.**

**178 lbs.**

**Staff Sgt. Christopher Downs, Fort Carson,  
Tremaine Knox, Fort Riley, Kan., 0:29**

**201 lbs.**

**Sgt. Joe Guzman, Fort Carson, Colo.,  
Spencer, Fort Hood, Texas, 30-27.**

**201+ lbs.**

**Sgt. Andrew Shepard, Fort Eustis, Va.**



**All-Army Boxing head coach Basheer Abdullah looks at Spc. McCoy's hand before he bouts.**



# ces Championships

o.

field, Ga.

stopped Spc. Blair Fuller,

as outpointed Staff Sgt.

o., 17-15.

., stopped Spc. Jonathan

d 3.

Colo., outpointed Spc.

., 34-13.

erson, Colo., stopped Spc.

) in Round 1.

outpointed Spc. Jeffrey

., unopposed.



Photo by Esau Lolis

dullah wraps Spc. Quentin



Photo by Brandy Ruiz

Sgt. Esteban Alamarez, Fort Hood, Texas, takes a knee after his fight with Staff Sgt. Marshall Christmas. He stopped Sgt. Christopher Lewallen, Fort Bragg, N.C., 1:15 in Round 2 during the first night of boxing. Almarez went on to win the 2006 All-Army gold medal in the heavy-weight division by ousting Christmas, world class athlete of Fort Carson Colo., during the second night of boxing.



Photo by Brandy Ruiz

Sgt. Joe Guzman raises his hands in victory after his win over Spc. Jeffery Spencer, 30-27.



Photo by Esau Lolis

Spc. John Franklin squared off against Sgt. Jose Jimenez in a match bout at the 2006 All-Army Boxing Championship Jan. 21 at Fort Huachuca, Ariz. Franklin. Both fighters will advance to the Armed Forces Boxing Championship.



Photo by Esau Lolis

## Army Armed Forces Team Roster

### Female Athletes

SGT Princess Finn 165lbs  
2LT Khara Keegan 119lbs

### Male Athletes

SPC John Franklin 112/119lbs  
SGT Jose Jimenez 125  
SPC Charles Rios 132  
SGT Esteban Almaraz 141lbs  
1LT Boyd Melson 152lbs  
SPC Quentin McCoy 165lbs  
SSG Christopher Downs 178lbs  
SGT Joe Guzman 201lbs  
SGT Andrew Shepherd 201+lbs

### Staff

Team Manager:  
Mr. Les Woods

Head Coach:  
Mr. Basheer Abdullah

Assistant Coaches:  
SFC George Cofield  
Trainer:  
SSG Charles Leverette